

Item	Discussions and Decisions Made	Actions
	Governors approved the Minutes.	
AUDIT		
5.1	<p>Audit Review</p> <p>LJ had shared the audit papers. Audited accounts will be approved by Members at the AGM in December.</p> <p>Committee attendance was queried. LM has resigned from the committee. JK to discuss Membership with LM and committee membership possibilities with other governors.</p> <p>Q – Were there any significant issues highlighted by Auditors?</p> <p>A – There were no significant concerns and the auditors have not requested any changes from a cash counting perspective.</p> <p>Governors were happy to accept the audited accounts, which will be circulated for approval by Members at the AGM in December.</p>	JK
5.2	<p>HR Management Audit Update on Actions</p> <p>LJ ran through the list of actions in the previous minutes and updated on these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Strategy: To be presented at the March meeting • References to legislation in policies: To be added as each policy is reviewed. • Safer recruitment: Training link circulated • Rehabilitation of Offenders Act: In place from January • Additional checks for overseas candidates: Changed on application form, but not on TES application form. LJ to discuss with TES. • Online searches: Already in advert but will also be included in application form (ready for next meeting). • Signing of employment contracts before first day of contract: Not realistic, but by January the offer letter will be sent out with updated information and this will then be reiterated in the contract. • Training: Bespoke training required for each new staff member; an overall framework is not practical. • Interview scoring: Panel members will be reminded how the scoring works. • Appraisals: EH has created a hard copy of this (not on Sharepoint). • Formal leavers’ process: There is a formal process but it is not currently documented. This will be done for March. <p>LJ to provide further updates on items above in March.</p> <p>Q – How are changes to legislation incorporated into staffing policies, such as change to minimum wage etc? How do Governors ensure these</p>	LJ

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	<p>are updated?</p> <p>A – Alerts to changes come from variety of sources including the ESFA, VWV (lawyers), GovernorHub/The Key. Big changes are due with new employment laws coming in and webinars will be run on these.</p> <p>Q – Do staff do a self-appraisal?</p> <p>A – No, but they are given three targets including a quality of teaching target and they have to provide evidence for what they have done to achieve against these. This is then discussed at their appraisal meetings, which happen twice a year. Support staff have two targets relating to bodies of work that they have to complete. Their appraisal process starts in March/April.</p>	
5.3	<p>Internal Audit Areas of Scrutiny</p> <p>LJ had circulated options for internal scrutiny from Strictly Education. The following items were agreed by Governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 8 – Finance, Month End • Item 18 – Premises • Item 23 – Business Continuity 	
FINANCE		
6.1	<p>Year End 23-24 and I&E 24-25</p> <p>LJ had circulated the figures and ran through the commentary, highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23-24 surplus closed on £249,787.70 (with reception build paid for). This is a really good outcome. • Sixth form numbers have increased by 22, increasing the funding (which is lagged) by £110k. Numbers fluctuate at the beginning of term but it is more significant if they change after census day because that is the number of students that is funded. If they leave after census, school loses on its retention rate and the student doesn't complete their destination. Originally there were about 30 new sixth form students but it was down to 22 on census day. Occasionally Year 13s choose to re-sit Year 12 (2 this year). • The aim is for 100 students in both Years 12 and 13, with 200 across the sixth form regarded as 'breakeven' financially. Currently Year 12 – 108 but Year 13 is smaller, with a total of 185 across the whole sixth form. The numbers in the budget are based on these figures. School is looking for an additional 20 students in September 2025. • The lettings forecast has been reduced as one dance company booking has been lost (gone somewhere cheaper). • Teachers pay and pensions: The NI grant information is awaited and is therefore not in the figures yet. NI is going up 1.2% and the threshold for payment is reducing to £5k. There will be a clearer 	

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	<p>picture in March.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% staff cost as a % of GAG funding. This is alarmingly high but the way it is measured is arguable (based on total income OR GAG funding only?) • School will be short of two AHTs for the spring term so there will be a saving here. • There is one additional TA in the Sixth Form. • Staffing is a very fluid situation currently, but it is hoped this will have settled by March. • A number of bought in curriculum packages are being used so this line (BCU) has increased, but they are very useful as requirements increase and they complete tasks that would otherwise have to be done by staff members. • Cleaning costs have been increased due to the minimum wage increase from April. • Electricity was £144k last year so £120k has been budgeted. One meter is being renewed this week. • Gas is budgeted for £80k but this closed on £68k last year. • Photocopying has significantly reduced across the school. • Repairs & maintenance costs are increasing all the time. • RPA cover: Exact figure is now known and included in the budget. • Overall, the projected deficit for the 24-25 year has reduced from £300k to £174k but with potential pension savings of £151k and lagged funding of £110k expected for the sixth form increases. Hopefully this will result in no deficit at the end of the year. • The OTH line includes costs for alternative provision for students. This is expensive as provision needfully involves a much smaller staff:student ratio. Some students who are not attending school due to mental health issues have been provided with Academy 21 at home, but it has been established that this is not a requirement; rather, School must provide students with work and mark it, so this will be done instead, to save costs here. Some students also receive a tutor 2-4 hours a week at home and then move onto a part time timetable at school. Where there are behaviour issues at school, a placement at an alternative provision (12 weeks) is sometimes tried, but this costs upwards of £5-6k and sometimes as much as £22k depending on need. School is working to reduce the costs in OTH by looking at what more can be done in The Base and The Bridge rather than using expensive external alternative provision. <p><i>Q – Are travel costs also paid for those students attending alternative provision?</i></p> <p>A – Yes, but these are included in a different line in the budget.</p>	

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	<p>Q – Does this hide the true cost of what alternative provision costs the school? Is there anything else as well as travel costs?</p> <p>A – Some of the travel costs are very expensive, e.g. to Oxford each day. However, it's the right thing to do to pay travel costs to ensure these opportunities are available to students who need them and to preserve the relationship with their families. Travel costs are the only additional thing outside the AP cost in the OTH line.</p> <p>Q – Whose decision is it where the student will go?</p> <p>A – Some placements are not EH's choice, e.g. non-Ofsted registered places may be refused as if something goes wrong (e.g. from a safeguarding perspective) it remains EH's responsibility. School would prefer if the child was managed under the 'personal budget' route, but this would mean they were the LA's responsibility and they do not want this. The student profile is changing and there are more behaviour issues, so it comes down to tough conversations with parents and improving our internal provision to try to bring down the costs.</p>	
6.2	<p>16-19 Student Support Fund Payments</p> <p>LJ reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 students applied for bursaries and all had evidence for the medium grant, therefore the pot was split equally between them all. <p>Q – Why are so many of the applicants female?</p> <p>A – No particular reason. There are two sets of sisters included.</p>	
6.3	<p>Teacher Salary Review</p> <p>LJ has circulated the teacher appraisals summary and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probationary teachers are included in the main scale section. It is possible not to pass probation, or to have it extended by 6 or 9 calendar months. If all pass the % will increase from 32% to 40% on this scale. • To pass probation, teachers don't have to be 'the finished article' but they must be willing to listen to feedback and develop. • Interviews for DHTs are taking place and there is a strong field but they will not be able to start until after Easter. • A high % of teachers are on the upper pay scale, which contributes to the high % staff cost/funding, but having high quality teachers makes a big difference. • Upper pay scale teachers are expected to be working at a whole school level and training other teachers. • Unqualified teachers don't teach a full load (60/70%). There are three this year. They benefit from summer training before they arrive and are moved onto the main pay scale after a year. 	

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6.4	<p>AFH List of Musts – Status Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LJ had updated and circulated the list of musts. • Commentary can be added to the ‘fully compliant’ section as necessary, to explain location of evidence for this. • Digital & technology standards are not yet included in this list but will be added by March. See item 4 above. 	
PREMISES, HEALTH & SAFETY		
7	<p>Premises Report</p> <p>LJ had circulated a report and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two CIF bids are planned. • Pipework bid has grown as a result of surveys. New boilers were put in but the pipework in the main block and the tower block is letting them down and there have been lots of heating problems. • The art room gets too hot and there is no ventilation. • Tender figures are awaited and the bids must be submitted by mid-December. • Governors to be consulted via an extraordinary meeting via Teams when costs are known, to agree the school’s % contribution to the bids. • Pipeworks will take more than six weeks (i.e. longer than the summer holiday) but the heating is off in the summer term, so this could be commenced after Easter if the bid is won. Both bid works could be completed at the same time without clashing. <p>Q – Could there be a major impact to teaching & learning?</p> <p>A – The roof works would not have a major impact, as they will take place on the outside. The pipework is inside the building, but school is used to managing projects like these and would stage works accordingly and ensure there is minimal disruption, especially for exams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar works are imminent, following a delay. • Expansion snagging items have now been moved onto the H&S report to Bucks and LJ continues to push for resolution of these. • There are problems with the underfloor heating in the Maths/English/PE block as the valves were substandard and have ‘popped’. It is hoped these will be replaced in the first week of December at Bucks’ (or Wilmott Dixon’s) expense. Email received from Bucks telling school to go head. • The cold water storage tank is a Legionella risk, as previously reported. <p>Q – Can Bucks be given a deadline to respond to the cold water storage tank issue?</p> <p>A – LJ will draft a letter from Governors to Bucks about this.</p>	LJ

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	<p>Q – Is the projector/screen replacement programme now complete? A – Yes, all have now been replaced and staff are happy. The next step is replacement of PCs, staff laptops and Wifi access points. An audit is currently taking place on these.</p> <p>Governors commented that the results of the phishing tests were good. A – Staff are much more aware of what to look out for now.</p>	
8	Health & Safety	
8.1	<p>Termly Visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TG’s termly visit report had been circulated. He looked at logs for fire, Legionella and doors. • Snagging issues have been added to the H&S report. • LJ to add dates when items are reported to Bucks to aid tracking. 	LJ
8.2	<p>H&S Radiation Audit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report had been circulated. • This is supposed to be checked every three years. • School buys into the Radiation Protection Service through Bucks they check it on an ongoing basis, but the last external audit was done in 2018. <p>Q – Will a radiation check always be necessary? A – School will always have radioactive sources, so an audit will always be required. There are items on the science syllabus which are much more memorable when seen in action. The science team did very well in this audit.</p>	
8.3	<p>Risk Register The document had been circulated but there had been no changes.</p> <p>Q – Where does adverse weather fit into the risk register? A – The response to adverse weather (flipping learning to Teams, getting everyone home safely, having salt on site, site team at school early for checks etc) is part of the business continuity plan.</p> <p>Q – Are electricity/generator issues (experienced last year) included in the risk register? A – Power outage is also covered in the business continuity plan.</p> <p>Governors were happy with the risk register.</p>	
OTHER MATTERS		
9	<p>ICT Update Update slides from EAC had been circulated. LJ highlighted:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two broadband lines in place. • Testing took place over half term and a report was received. • Migration to hosted SIMS will happen as soon as possible, hopefully by April 2025. <p>Q – What is the cost of moving to the new SIMS? A – It is more expensive, but hopefully it will bring benefits and reduce staff time manually inputting.</p> <p>Q – Are all school files contained in the Cloud? Is anything critical still onsite? A – Lots is in the Cloud, but not everything. Much has been moved to Sharepoint. Everything mission critical is backed up.</p> <p>Q – Backing up isn't the same as accessible, in terms of the business continuity plan, e.g. if there is a power outage students and staff could go home and continue working there. A – LJ to ask EAC to prepare mapping of this.</p> <p>Q – Recommendations from the report seem light, especially where things are recommended that are already being done. A – Time needs to be put aside in the diary for a Cyber Security incident exercise (last recommendation). LJ to diaries this academic year. Governors recommended that LJ and EH should not be involved in a cyber security exercise if they have planned it. Staff understanding of what to do needs to be tested.</p> <p>EH confirmed that all SLT members also have a paper copy of the business continuity plan in their bags/office.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LJ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LJ</p>
10	<p>Pupil Premium Statement The statement had been circulated. There were no questions. The statement will be formally approved by FGB</p>	
11	<p>Any Other Business TLR structure changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LJ tabled a paper showing proposed changes to the SLT structure. • This had been approved at the beginning of the year, but further changes are proposed. • With school now much bigger the existing leadership structure is not suitable, especially with growing numbers of SEND students. • The top 20 schools in the country all have higher numbers of DHTs. • Two AHTs are leaving, so the structure needs to be formalised to allow for the right replacements to be made quickly. • Greater capacity is needed in the leadership team as will be very 	

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	<p>difficult to achieve everything with just one Head and one Deputy. AHTs have a higher teaching load.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional costs are not huge in the first year (£18k). By year 4 they rise to £44k but the proposed increase in sixth form size should finance this. • School would like to add one more AHT to the plan but this requires additional funding streams so is not being proposed at this stage. <p>Q – Will the increased number of DHTs (with a lower teaching load) mean more teachers are required?</p> <p>A – SLT are used to teach a variety of subject areas, so can stand in where required. School has cover supervisors internally, which works better than going out for supply teachers constantly. There will be the same number of bodies, just more DHTs and fewer AHTs. The timetable has already been done for January based on this structure and it shows that there is enough capacity slack in the system to allow for this increase in DHTs (and corresponding loss of their teaching hours).</p> <p>Q – Do SLT staff like the variety of teaching different subjects or is it seen as a negative?</p> <p>A – It depends on the person. Some like the variety. Heads of Department are very supportive of staff stepping in, with meetings and resources to support them.</p> <p>Governors approved the change to the SLT structure.</p>	
12	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 6.30pm</p>	
13	<p>Evaluation of Meeting Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions. The meeting closed at 8.45pm</p>	

Signed Date

CHAIR